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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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THE FUTURE OF YOUR TEACUP

If your hostess's china is exquisite, she deserves credit for good taste, but remember she didn't design it. If the cream pitcher drips on the fresh lace cloth, don't feel embarrassed. The fault is with the ceramic artist.

All these matters are the responsibility of specialists. Your china may be machine-made but some person decides whether the soup plates are to be deep or shallow, or whether the bands of colour are to be broad or narrow. Some person will determine the future of your teacup.

In working over these problems the modern specialist naturally wishes to profit by the experience of potters of other lands and times. The Royal Ontario Museum, your Museum, is ready to help him, and does. Representatives of the Canadian Guild of Potters, and students from our technical schools and colleges find here a rich collection of pottery and porcelain for study. Here they consider their problems about clay, about glaze and the firing of china. They are inspired by the clean-cut shapes of ancient Greek vases, the luscious glazes of the Persians, the lovely forms and colours of the Chinese, not to mention the more familiar products of France and England.

The usefulness of your Museum's collection is spreading beyond our province too. Each year the senior class from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University spends a week in its galleries. These students of to-day, from Ontario and beyond, will design your china of tomorrow. Your Museum has helped them and through them helps you.

CLOTHES MOTH A FIFTH-COLUMNIST

"Thousands of dollars are lost annually as a result of the appetite of young clothes moths," stated Dr. Urquhart, Curator of Insects at the Royal Ontario Museum. Fabrics containing wool, fur, feathers or other animal matter are subject to attack. Like fifth-columnists, female clothes moths flit in under cover of darkness to spread ruin and destruction. Since certain materials, such as wool, are more difficult to obtain in war time, it is essential that we keep a watchful eye on clothing kept in storage during the warm summer months.

"Materials liable to attack should be stored in tightly sealed paper bags or cardboard cartons and contain a liberal supply of paradichlorobenzine," advised Dr. Urquhart. "This compound, available at any drug store, repels the female seeking a food supply for her worm-like and destructive offspring."

Open WEEK DAYS except MONDAY 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
SUNDAYS 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

THE LAST OF THE GINKGOS

Here and there in especially favoured spots in our large cities the maidenhair tree or ginkgo grows. The tall pyramidal outline of a well formed example is certainly attractive. But the ginkgo's appeal goes far beyond its trim, exotic outline. The ginkgo may be thought of as a living fossil. Its botanical affinities are still a matter of study by scientists although it is generally considered to be related to the conifers. If we examine the fossil collection of the Royal Ontario Museum we find that the ginkgos flourished abundantly in past ages, - in fact they enjoyed almost world-wide distribution. To-day they occur as natives of China and Japan, as curiosities in Canada, and as fossil specimens in museums.

COULDN'T "KEEP 'EM FLYING"

Bones of the extinct Great Auk have just been received by the Royal Ontario Museum. This bulky sea-bird was flightless, "grounded", shall we say, by too small a wing-spread. Nature couldn't "keep 'em flying", and they were doomed. History tells us that as late as 1785, French and English mariners regularly visited the low islands in the seas of Newfoundland to stock their larders. They herded these luckless birds over gang-planks onto their ships, where they were slaughtered and salted down. The Great Auk became extinct about 1844.

WATCH YOUR STEP

Who knows? Perhaps you are walking on a strategic mineral right now--one urgently needed in Canada's war work--tin, chromium, tungsten, manganese, mercury, vanadium ores, iceland spar, rock crystal, fluorite, mica.

At the Royal Ontario Museum, Dr. V.B. Meen directed us to the new exhibit illustrating the "Prospectors Guide for Strategic Minerals in Canada," a little booklet published by the Department of Mines and Resources. In this display, the minerals are shown in their every-day clothes, just as you and I might pick them up. Mercury, for instance, is obtained from a red mineral called cinnabar. Tin comes from dark brown or black cassiterite which sometimes looks like any other water-rounded pebble but feels much heavier. Manganese and molybdenum, used to harden steel occur in soft, dark-coloured minerals. When you look through iceland spar you are seeing double.

Many of these minerals are found in Canada in varying degrees of quantity and quality. Some have not, as yet, been found in Canada at all. So, amateur prospectors, watch where you step!